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ABSTRACT

The two papers in this compilation were drawn from a conference designed to encourage scholars to continue the rhetorical tradition. The first paper, delivered by Todd Sorenson and Carrie Stopek, was the paper most highly commended by a panel of critics at the conference. The paper uses fantasy theme analysis, specifically the three fantasy theme myths of the Hero, the Fellowship, and the Sacrifice, to examine the so-called "electronic church," today's television ministry. The second paper, by Anthony Hillbruner, was the major address of the conference and presents a rhetorical analysis of Hegel's theory of dialectic. (FL)

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CONFERENCE IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM 1981

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16th Annual
Address of the Conference and Commended Papers

Sponsored by the Students & Professors of
the Department of Speech and Drama
California State University, Hayward

Professor Harold Barrett, Conference Director
Professor Daniel S. Prentice, Department Chair
Alice Manion Kemp, Editor
Professor John Baird & Professor Ellen Owens, Assistant Editors
Cover by Steele

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The Rhetorical Criticism Conference has, for sixteen years, provided a forum where students of rhetoric may have their papers critiqued by a panel of highly qualified, impartial judges. The students profit not only from the judges' thoughtful, considered, and written recommendations for improvement, but also from their questions and immediate responses to the students' oral presentation of their papers.

The student's paper most highly commended by the judges and the Address of the Conference are published here in commemoration of the conference.

Through the Rhetorical Criticism Conference and this journal, we hope to continue to make a contribution to learning and to the rhetorical tradition.

Alice Manion Kemp
Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all the professors and students whose participation helped to make this year's conference a success. In addition to those whose names are specifically listed as participants, either as critics or authors, I would also like to thank Professor G.P. Mohrmann and Professor Susan B. Shimanoff, both from the University of California, Davis, for their support. Special thanks are due to Professor Jack A. Samosky, California State University, Hayward, who annually presides over the evening festivities dispensing good cheer in his own inimitable way. Special thanks to our own dear Shirley Borden, who assists in the conference and the publication of the journal in countless ways.

On behalf of the Speech and Drama Department, I would like to express our gratitude to Professor Harold Barrett, who conceived the conference sixteen years ago and has kept it running smoothly through his continued direction.

Finally, I thank my assistant editors, Professor John Baird of the Speech/Drama Department at California State University, Hayward and Professor Ellen Owens of the English Department at Chabot College, Valley Campus. Their help has been invaluable to me.

Alice Manion Kemp
Editor

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California State University, Los Angeles
"Rhetoric as *Zeitgeist:*
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Ron Capps, "The Rhetoric of a Contemporary Storyteller: Harry Chapin and His Music," California State University, Fresno.

Scott McDonald, "Wilson and the Conscious Adoption of Style," University of California, Davis.

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EDITOR — CRITICS

Professor James H. Byrns, Diablo Valley College

Professor John Cambus, California State University, Hayward

Professor William G. Davey, Arizona State University

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Professor David F. Quadro, California State University, Fresno

Professor Gale Y. Schroeder, California State University, Hayward

Professor Philip C. Wander, San Jose State University

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS — APRIL 24, 1981

1:00 Briefing — Theatre Courtyard
Greeting: Alice Kemp, Speech Communication and English major, Co-Editor of the 1980 *Conference in Rhetorical Criticism in Rhetorical Criticism Journal.*

1:30 Presentation of Papers in Sections
Presentation
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4:00 Reading of Commended Papers to Entire Conference — Robinson Hall 137

5:30 Cocktail Hour at Campus Ministry Center
Master of Ceremonies:
Harold Barrett
Introducing the Speaker:
John C. Hammerback
Speaker:
Anthony Hillbruner
California State University, Los Angeles
"Rhetoric as *Zeitgeist:* Variations on a Theme by Hegel"

THE ELECTRONIC CHURCH: MEDIA-CREATED MYTH

Todd Sorenson and Carrie Stopek
Arizona State University

"The commercial opens 'soft.' A female voice-over begins, 'In every woman's life there are memories. . .' Sentimental music filters in, . . . we follow a woman along her memory lane: from her first date to her first child . . . 'Of all my memories,' the woman says, 'the most precious in my life is the day I prayed with Pat.' "[1]

For contemporary Americans this scenario is not unique. More than 129 million people experience "religious programming."[2] In addition to the large audiences that the "electronic church" is attracting, its political and religious impact is significant and controversial. While some maintain that the messages of the media preachers represent a dangerous blurring of the distinctions between church and state, others see it as a response to a valid and nationwide grassroots movement—a reflection of the values of what has been called the "Moral Majority."[3] Regardless of the view one holds, the success of this programming is clearly evident. Nearly all of the top-grossing television evangelists are constantly diversifying and expanding their operations.[4] Such a startling phenomenon in mass persuasion deserves our serious consideration.

While the preachers of the "electronic church" maintain that their enormous financial prosperity is proof of God's blessings (Oral Robert's annual broadcasting revenue for 1979 was estimated at $60 million),[5] this success is surely facilitated by, if not attributable to, skillful rhetoric designed to "sell the product," The purpose of this criticism is to isolate the rhetorical techniques employed by the preachers of the "electronic church" and to discuss the relationship between those devices and the influence of the television ministry. One means of analyzing this rhetoric is by fantasy theme analysis. We contend that it is by the effective use of three major fantasy themes: the "Hero" myth, the "Fellowship" myth, and the "Sacrifice" myth that the "electronic church" influences its followers.

While a review of the literature relevant to the "electronic church" reveals a wide variety of attitudes, beliefs, and opinions, certain commonalities seem to emerge. Many sources note with concern a growing political activism in "prime time religion" which seems to represent a threat to the concept of separation of church and state.[6] Several articles also observe that the "electronic church" is making it difficult for mainline churches to raise funds, since local churches cannot match the showmanship employed by the media preachers with their "talk show formats."[7] Finally, the literature alludes to certain questionable financial practices, including raising money for one purpose and using it for another, using access to millions of dollars to influence public opinion and policy making, and channeling non-profit monies into the preachers' own pockets.[8]

Bormann provides a systematic model of "fantasy theme" analysis that allows for a consideration of the elements of fantasy in persuasion that appear to be common to all of the segments of discourse studied. Among these are: the role of television in intensifying the viewer's perception of the preachers, the actual words and images used, and the emotional appeals employed in the "catching up" of individuals into a common ground with large groups of people.[9]

Let us begin by presenting first definitions of "myth" and "fantasy theme," and then proceed to the analysis of themes observed in the "electronic church."[10] Fantasy themes, a myth or collection of myths, are part of the process of group fantasizing. A.J. Sykes defines myth as "the expression of abstract ideas in a concrete form. . .The actual truth or falsity of the story is irrelevant; what is important is that the story and the ideas it embodies are accepted and believed to be true."[11] Arising from these myths are fantasy themes, or fantasy events, in which". . .one is transported to a world which seems somehow even more real than the everyday world. One may feel exalted, fascinated, perhaps horrified or threatened, or powerfully impelled to action, but in any case, involved. One's feelings fuse with the sumbols and images. . . and sustain it over time. One is psychologically taken into a psychodramatic fantasy world. . .".[12] These myths can be seen as the "hero" God and his right-hand man, the television personality, fellowshipping with the audience who individually demonstrates "fellowship" through "sacrifice."

HERO MYTH

A characteristic myth hero seemed to emerge from the programs viewed. He possessed several characteristics inherently praiseworthy. In all of the programs recorded, God is portrayed as one who is all-knowing and who desires to heal the hurts and needs of all people. His ability to do so is unequivocably recognized. "No problem is too big for Jesus."[13] In fact, "He delights in doing with the impossible.[14] Omnipotence is a concrete characteristic; and detailed examples were given in the form of testimonies of healing and problem solving.

Members of the audience are assured they will see the power of Jesus in their life and "experience an outpouring of God's power."[15] The negative connotations of an all-powerful deity are minimized by ascribing pure unselfishness and love to the God-Hero's motives. Sermons and hymns extol Christ's totally unselfish death on the cross. As one singer on the *Love Special* program sang, "He could have called ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set Him free. . .but he died alone for you and me."[16]

Secondly, the Hero is portrayed as diametrically opposing Evil (the personified villains in the drama being the devil and "the world"). A typical scenario sets the vile and wicked devil, who is constantly maneuvering and plotting against the helpless individual against Hero-God who seeks to save that person from the devil and sin.[17] The audience is assured that final victory is inevitable. For, Jesus has never lost a battle; and He is coming back to gather up His saints.[18] "It isn't win a few and lose a few; we win "'em all!"[19] One is encouraged to join in God's holy hatred for sin, avoid the fiery darts of the devil, and join the winning side.[20]

Finally, this Hero of power, pure motives, and victory is portrayed as very personal. At some point in almost every show, often repeatedly, one is exhorted to "come to Jesus," to have "a personal encounter with God," to "accept Jesus as personal Savior." Most of the time these terms are not further explained, allowing for individual viewers to construct their own symbolic reality. (Among the programs reviewed, only Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggert, and one episode of *Praise The Lord* offered some specific explanations of that terminology.)

Thus, the "Hero" myth provides the ultimate legitimization of the television drama. The media preachers are characterized as the Hero's representatives, His close co-workers. Their activity is usually referred to as "this ministry": hero and "electronic church" are symbolized together. Jimmy Swaggert, for example, spoke of God's "right-hand" at work in Spain, changing lives and saving souls, identifying his particular niche in electronic church as "literally touching millions of lives every week."[21] Once the attractive nature of the Hero and his spokesmen is firmly established the desirability of being allied with their "group" is clear. The "Fellowship" myth represents this alliance and helps create a united people.

FELLOWSHIP MYTH

The abstract ideas of togetherness and having a part in a corporate identity find concrete expression by the "electronic church." Three techniques are employed to meet the individual's need for affiliation.

The first technique involves the use of phrases such as "We love you," "We need you," and "Let us share your prayer requests" to create a sense of togetherness and identification The preacher involves the studio and television audiences by linking them to each other. In an attempt to reach each viewer personally, the feeling of fellowship is encouraged by specifically including "you in the pews and you by your television," and the reassurance that "you are part of us."[22]

The second technique is the superimposing of telephone numbers on the screen and praying for audience prayer requests. Easy opportunity to call makes possible immediate participation by the viewers (who are instructed to go to the phones and dial in their prayer requests). Calling is encouraged. Only first names or the city of origin are used. This allows for more people to identify with the request than a full name or address would. Further, it is emphasized that "these are not just pieces of paper—each one of them represents a soul—a need."[23] Thus, by personifying the requests and turning them into something tangible, the preacher appears to be responding to each individual "soul." Through this, members of the audience are made to feel "involved." Jerry Falwell concludes a number of his sermons by calling for audience prayer requests: "While you are right now here in need, our pastors are ready to go with you to a private prayer room and pray with you."[24]

Perhaps the most effective of these techniques, and often the most dramatic and emotionally intensive, is the use of testimonies. They tend to broaden the audience appeal while at the same time allowing for individual viewers to find common ground

with the large television audience. Testimonies come from people of various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Included in our sample were a local Mexican-American, rock star Little Richard, Mike Ditka (assistant coach of the Dallas Cowboys), Dale Evans, and the brother of lawyer F. Lee Bailey.[25] A viewer is certain to find someone like himself or herself, someone to respect and with whom to identify. Even a "good ole boy" can find someone as one testimony proclaimed: "I just found out that Jesus loves cowboys, with all of the problems we have—I just found out that Jesus loves cowboys and this cowboy shore is glad."[26] All of these techniques work together to allow the lonely individual to "fellowship" with a nationwide congregation. The preachers of the "electronic church" seem to be activating the coping mechanism that Bormann refers to when he writes: "The rhetorical vision serves much the same coping function for those who participate in the drama and often with much more force because of the supportive warmth of like-minded companions." [27]

SACRIFICE MYTH

The third theme (closely related to the other two) is the "Sacrifice" myth. The underlying premise of this myth is that good purposes (God's purposes) are accomplished through sacrifice; the television minister (or program) being viewed as a selfless, godly worker of those purposes. As Oral Roberts put it, "I'm not building the City of Faith (medical center) for myself. In fact, I never would have built it, but God laid it upon my heart for the sick of the world to receive both God's healing streams of prayer and medicine. . ."[28] Important to this first premise is the concept that the more worthy the purpose and greater the final reward, the greater the sacrifice it will require.

The secondary premise is that God will provide the money (no matter how big the project) by helping people find the dollars to donate. Oral and Evelyn Roberts skillfully illustrate this premise as it related to the City of Faith:

Oral: "You see, this is a wonderful way God has ordained for us to finish the City of Faith. . ." (Viewers were asked to send $120 each).

Evelyn: "Honey, I feel like maybe there's somebody out there—I know you might say, 'I just can't afford a hundred and twenty dollars.' But I believe the Lord will show them how to get it, Oral. . .because this is such a precious gift. A hundred and twenty dollars is nothing over a period of time; and if they save a little bit at a time they can find the money. The Lord is gonna show them how."

Oral: "Or, in the next week God will show you how to get that hundred and twenty dollars."[29]

It follows then from the two premises just mentioned that a specific manner (or amount) of sacrifice is required of the "fellowshippers." Donations are solicited in some cases with a show-ending reminder that, "your liberal support is so necessary in a television ministry like this one."[30] A deep sense of Christian responsibility is provoked, for it is "not so much that they (the viewers) should give. . .to this ministry, but that they should obey God. . ."[31] The giving accomplishes the good purpose of increasing faith as well as reaching the lost. One should "make that $120 a seed that you plant. . .if you will sow that seed, He will grow it and then you will reap it. . ."[32] Financial sacrifice is seen as a participation in the "ministry" of the electronic preacher or congregation. The viewer plays an important, God-ordained role because the programs really do depend "on your divinely inspired love and generosity."[33] The more abstract notion of saving sinners takes concrete form in giving to the "electronic church." And, if obedient faithfulness is not enough of an incentive, monogrammed bibles, "Jesus First" pins, or specially blessed prayer cloths are "given away" with each appropriate donation.

The "Hero" myth is linked to the "Sacrifice" myth in that the power behind this monetary contribution is a God who loves doing the impossible (an abstract idea in itself). This seems to suggest a linear relationship between not only the "Hero" and "Sacrifice" myths, but all three myths. Before one is willing to sacrifice, or even fellowship, it is essential that he or she accept the "Hero" myth. The "Fellowship" and "Sacrifice" myths seem to function subordinately to the "Hero." If one can be persuaded to believe in the "Hero" myth, the preacher does not have to go far to arouse feelings of fellowship and sacrifice. As Oral Roberts preaches: "remember, the greater the sacrifice, the greater the blessing."[34] The good purposes are made clear, the electronic church's role in their accomplishment is demonstrated, and opportunity is provided for the involvement of individuals in the fantasy theme. The three myths are thus mutually stimulating and work together to create the overall symbolic reality. In the words of the hymn, ". . .gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures, Jesus Thy perfect likeness to wear. . ."[35]

CONCLUSION

The skillful use of myth-laden fantasy themes seems to relate directly to the recent success of the "electronic church." Overall, the strength of these three fantasies lies in their ability to arouse and direct an individual's emotions and needs thereby creating a symbolic reality. The success of the electronic church testifies convincingly to the reality of its influence on its viewers. Complex moral and social issues are presented and solved by simplistic answers generated by the polished preacher in association with the God-Hero. Audiences accept the existence of a God-Hero with little question. Similarly, audiences accept the electronic preacher without stopping to consider questions of financial, ethical, or doctrinal propriety. The danger is not merely solicitation of money or the exercise of political influence; the true danger lies in the potential manipulation of an unsophisticated mass audience by highly skilled media professionals cloaking their designs behind the guise of heavenly service.

NOTES

[1] The reference is to Pat Robertson. See: Louis Gorfain, "Pray TV," *New Yorker*, 6 October 1980, pp. 49-53.

[2] See: "Stars of the Cathode Church," *Time*, 4 February 1980, p. 64, where ex-director of the National Religious Broadcasting, Ben Armstrong, claims that each week at least 14 million Americans watch a religious TV show and 115 million listen to a radio gospel program.

[3] Joseph Sobran, "Good News," *National Review*, 27 June 1980, p. 793.

[4] Gorfain, pp. 49-53; and, John Mariani, "Television Evangelism: Milking the Flock," *Saturday Review*, 3 February 1979, pp. 22-25.

[5] Cary McWilliams, "Second Thoughts," *Nation*, 1 December 1979, p. 552.

[6] Carl F. Henry, "Evangelicals Jump on the Political Bandwagon," *Christianity Today*, 24 October 1980, pp. 20-25; and, Harold O.J. Brown, "The Road to Theocracy?" *National Review*, 31 October 1980, p. 1329.

[7] See: Mariani, pp. 22-25; McWilliams, p. 552; and Franklin B. Krohn, "The Sixty-Minute Commercial: Marketing Salvation," *Humanist*, December 1980, pp. 26-31.

[8] *Time*, p. 64; and, "All About Oral," *60 Minutes*, narr. Morley Safer, prod. CBS News, 27 January 1980.

[9] Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 58 (1972), pp. 396-407.

[10] During the month of March 1981, over twenty hours of religious programming was taped. Each program quoted in this paper was viewed and taped on at least three different occasions and 5% of the total monthly broadcast time of the *Praise The Lord* show (produced by the Trinity Broadcasting Network and aired daily on Channel 21 in Phoenix) was recorded as well. For other shows aired on channel 21 for twelve hours per month or less, a sample of 15-25% was taped.

[11] A.J.M. Sykes, "Myth in Communication," *The Journal of Communication*, 20 (1970), p. 17.

[12] Robert F. Bales, *Personality and Interpersonal Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1970), pp. 136-155.

[13] *The Old Time Gospel Hour*, Pastor Jerry Falwell, ABC, 22 March 1981; and, *Praise The Lord*, hosts Paul and Jan Crouch, Trinity broadcasting Network, 20 March 1981.

[14] *The Old Time Gospel Hour*, 29 March 1981.

[15] *Praise The Lord*, 20 March 1981.

[16] *Love Special*, narr. Nancy Harmon, TBN, 22 March 1981.

[17] *Praise The Lord*, 20 March 1981.

[18] *700 Club*, host Pat Robertson, Independent, 22 March 1981.

[19] *Praise The Lord*, 20 March 1981.

[20] *ibid.*

[21] *Jimmy Swaggert*, Pastor Jimmy Swaggert, ABC, 22 March 1981.

[22] *Jimmy Swaggert*, 29 March 1981.

[23] ibid.

[24] *The Old Time Gospel Hour*, 15 March 1981.

[25] *Praise The Lord*, 22-27 March 1981 and *700 Club*, 23 March 1981.

[26] *Praise The Lord*, 20 March 1981.

[27] Bormann, p. 400.

[28] *Oral Roberts*, Oral Roberts, Independent, 24 March 1981.

[29] ibid.

[30] *It Is Written*, TBN, 22 March 1981.

[31] *Lester Sumrall*, Lester Sumrall, TBN, 31 March 1981.

[32] *Oral Roberts*, 22 March 1981.

[33] *Jewish Voice Broadcast*, host Louis Kaplan, TBN, 27 March 1981.

[34] *Oral Roberts*, 17 March 1981.

[35] ibid.

RHETORIC AS ZEITGEIST: VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY HEGEL

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I
INTRODUCTION

In the never-ending quest for a viable theory which might explain socio-cultural change, rhetoric as well as dialectic both have played significant roles. Rhetoric, from Plato in the classical period, to Kenneth Burke in our own, has looked at suasive discourse as seminal to the quest. And dialectic, from Zeno of Elia in classical times, to Karl Marx in the nineteenth century, has also attempted to explain this historical process through its own functioning. In actuality, neither rhetoric nor dialectic by itself, alone, can accomplish this task. What is needed is a theory which utilizes both in a reciprocal interdisciplinary fashion and in this way offers valid discernments into an explication of the process of cultural and social change.

Once explained, this approach may be seen as adding another dimension to the broad array of critical theories now available in the quest for this truth. It can also be of significant value in looking at rhetoric within the purview of the humanistic tradition. At a time when behavioral and socio-scientific approaches dominate the theories of discourse, it is this humanistic tradition of rhetoric that needs reassertion.

The theory which will be posited for these purposes is an interdisciplinary one which, in the dialectical sense, transcends the binary factors to a new vision. Combining elements from rhetorical theory and dialectical theory, it thus postulates a new synthesis. This critical viewpoint suggests rhetoric as the successor to Hegel's theory, making rhetoric the prime mover in the quest for the valid truth of socio-cultural change. For this purpose then, this view focuses first on the "real" revolution of historical development, moves to an exposition of dialectic from Zeno of Elia to Marx, and finally, utilizes the language theory of Roland Barthes to help explain rhetoric's role in society. All this, then, is relevant to the function of rhetoric in the neo-dialectic which, as the "real" revolution, can critically evaluate the vast spectacle of cultural and social change.

II
RHETORIC IN THE "REAL" REVOLUTION

Let me begin with a historical exegesis. Doubtless the overthrow of British arms which brought independence to America was begun with the word. This was the "real" revolution, accomplished by the sword, via rhetoric in a historical dialectical process. For, while the military revolution eventually made the United States a governmental entity, this was only an implementation of the "real" revolutionary movement begun more than two decades earlier. The rhetoric of the courtroom, with James Otis; the church, with Jonathan Mayhew; the legislature, with Patrick Henry; and the streets, with Sam Adams, was part of the dialectical movement pitted against the *status quo* which eventually brought cultural, political, and social change. Without the word of the rhetors in articulate public discourse, there would not have been a revolution; for the words are where we live, not just socially and culturally, but morally, spiritually, even physically.

Ever since the Revolution, furthermore, American development has been motivated by the word functioning through rhetoric within a phenomenon called the ebb and flow of socio-cultural change. This is analagous to Hegel's philosophy of history. It may be recalled that, simply stated, Hegel's theory contains a thesis (what is), challenged by an antithesis (its opposite). This eventually results in a synthesis (combining the best elements of both binary aspects). The synthesis, then, becomes the new thesis, and the process begins all over again. But the most important factor in the Hegelian process is the *zeitgeist*, a metaphysical world spirit, which serves as the motive power in initiating and bringing about development and change.

In American society, this ebb and flow means that after a period of quietus, almost inevitably, there has been a dissenting revolutionary thrust for change.

When this has run its course, a period of consolidation usually follows. The consolidation then becomes the new thesis and sets the scene for

still another antithetical movement to alter the situation. This, then, is an illustration of the Hegelian dialectical process at work.

III
THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIALECTIC

The term dialectic is a broad term; and as with the term rhetoric, it has a number of meanings for today's scholar, be he a humanist or a social scientist. Since many of these definitions of dialectic have relevance for its role in the "real" revolution of socio-cultural change, a succinct chronological development of the concept up to the time of Hegel may prove fruitful.

Originally stemming from the Greek expression for the art of conversation, dialectic had gone through a number of modifications before Hegel used it as a means of expressing both the logical process of thought and the deterministic process of history. There is, however, a common meaning: that dialectic is a method of seeking and perhaps of finding truth through the process of ratiocination and communication.

Originating in the fifth century B.C. with the paradoxes of Zeno of Elia, who first used them for serious philosophical purposes, dialectic later came to underlie the science of formal logic and eventually, through the Sophists, came to be an instrument for winning an argument. Plato, however, called this Sophistic process a specious dialectic, dubbing it eristic. His own conception of the dialectic was that of a supreme philosophical method, "a coping stone placed above the sciences."[1] With Socrates as his spokesman, Plato stood in contrast to the Sophists. The Socratic dialectic was the utilization of the art of discussion in the search for truth through the use of question and answer. The dialectician was a "man who knows how to ask and answer questions."[2] Through this process the philosopher-king, who had been educated properly, was able to reach certainty, that is, the ultimate good, or certain truth.

Aristotle's view of the dialectic was based upon Plato's, but no longer was it a method of certainty. Elaborated in his *Topics,* Aristotle's dialectic modified the epistemological status of the premises. In his dialectic, the reasoning is proper if the premises upon which it is based are acceptable by the majority. Aristotle's dialectic did not, therefore, claim to be as absolute or as certain as Plato's. With Aristotle, it was a way, then, of discovering truth in the realm of probability. Dialectic accomplished this because it was a critical tool which, with its positive and negative elements, "contains the path to the principles of all inquiries."[3] Aristotle's dialectic, because it was based upon this process, has been called the logic of probability. Moreover, during the Stoic period and in the middle ages, dialectic continued to be called logic. For example, dialectical or logical treatises were written by Alquin, Abelard, and Acquinas during the Scholastic period. After Acquinas, however, dialectic was not emphasized until the philosophers of the eighteenth century. The most important of these was Hegel.

Of the more contemporary theorists on dialectic preceding Hegel, perhaps Emmanuel Kant was the most important. Writing in his *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant set out a transcendental dialectic criticizing the logic of illusion used by the ancients. His theory set out a series of four antinomies of pure reason, that is, reason which transcended the actual experiences of human beings. Kant, however, did not dub the resolution stemming from these confrontations a synthesis. The man who first introduced the triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis into German philosophical thought was Johann Gotlieb Fichte. Fichte's synthesis, however, was a *uniting* of the thesis and antithesis, not the *new* conception of Hegel.

IV
HEGEL'S THEORY OF DIALECTIC

Hegel actually never used the terms thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, which have been associated with him, although he was aware of the traditional notion of the dialectic as logic. He paid tribute to Plato, calling the latter's *Parmenides* probably the greatest work in ancient dialectic. But Hegel was also aware of dialectic as a process of history. The idea of process was not completely new, having been present in Heraclitus, whose statement that one never enters the same river twice was part of that belief.[4] Hegel thus built his views upon ancient dialectical principles, but did add something new to the idea of process. Calling dialectic a kind of logic, Hegel categorized its necessary movement as operating in a triadic situation rather than the usual dialectical binary one. This necessary movement, then, operated in both ancient dialectic as logic and in his own dialectic as a philosophy of history.

In the quest for truth via logic, Hegel would define the dialectic as discussion. Thus, if two individuals with opposite views were participating in this quest, each one would bring out his viewpoint logically. But, since the discussion would be in the realm of probability, rhetoric as well as logic would be used. Hegel then suggested that neither of the disputants could completely carry or convince the other to his vision of truth. Eventually, however, by

each modifying his view, each disputant may accept a view which is newer and broader, encompassing the *substance* or essence of what each originally believed and each originally advocated. Thus, the original diametrically opposed views become reconciled into a synthesis which is higher and better than either of the opposing positions. Although Hegel did not say so, this dialectical process was actually synthesized by the engine of rhetoric.

Hegel's philosophy of history stems from this dialectical process, with the antithesis more important than the positive thesis. Negation is most important because it comes from the outside, from the existence of society, while the positive thesis stems from the inside or the essence of society. The drive towards synthesis, then, is initiated against the old thesis by the negative antithesis, with the old positive thesis defending itself.

Hegel's great work, the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* is divided along similar dialectical lines. These are Logic, Nature, and Mind or the spirit. These three concepts are related to each other in a dialectical fashion as in the method Hegel used in the exposition within each of them. The dialectic which he constructed, the logic of the systematic principle of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, was dependent upon the mutual opposition of ideas, which led to a progressive synthesis of this opposition. "It was the logical operational expression of a deep-lying ultimate principle. Hegel regarded the dialectical process as the ongoing movement and rhythm of all reality. His logic was, thus, in his basic intention, a metaphysic."[5]

This law of the dialectic, as Hegel developed it in the *Science of Logic,*[6] may seem arid and formal. The dialectic, however, is central to his thought, since, in his view, both the antithesis and the synthesis preserve as well as suspend the antecedent conception, that is, the thesis itself. A related view is that the synthesis elevated the two antecedent conceptions, that is, the thesis and the antithesis. All three concepts, therefore, are always needed and used.

However, "it is Hegel's contention that this dialectic process is not something he invented, not a new-fangled notion at all, but a sound and objective description of what has actually occurred in the history of the spirit as manifest in the development of philosophy."[7] To him dialectic is descriptive of a continuing process rather than a personal or social search for truth. It has, nevertheless, certain important deterministic components which make the process an attempt to discover truth in the society, since it is founded upon the classical dialectic.

Hegel's view of history via his logic, which he called the philosophy of history, can also be called the logic of history. It focused on the working out in time of the power of the *zeitgeist,* which is as rational as the Absolute itself. The *zeitgeist,* as the spirit of the world, a kind of metaphysical Godhead, a *deux machina,* brings about the change when humanity appears to be ready for it. It is the *zeitgeist* which operates in the mechanism of the dialectical process. Thus, there is always in the world a process of becoming. The world keeps getting better and better, so that at any one moment, it is the best of all worlds, in Hegel's view, given the conditions that exist in the society at that time. This process also explains the Platonist dichotomy between the world of the spirit and the world of matter. The world of matter keeps approaching the ideal world of the spirit, although it never reaches it. Each new synthesis which incorporates the logical thesis (Hegel's Logic) and the rational antithesis (Hegel's Nature) then becomes the spiritual synthesis (Hegel's Mind or Spirit).

All of this leads to a revised historical process. While Hegel recognized the value of the old dialectic, going all the way back to Plato to praise it, in his eagerness to express his own theory philosophically, he lost sight of rhetoric within the historical dialectic, even though he suggests credence to it in his own scrutiny and discussion of early classical dialectic.

V

MARX'S THEORY OF DIALECTIC

Marx, too, gave credence to the function of rhetoric, but as a Hegelian he was more interested in the logic of history than in the logic of dialectic. What Marx would not accept in the Hegelian process was, of course, the *zeitgeist* itself. It smacked too much of a godhead in theological discourse rather than an objective, deterministic, *historical* mover. Marx, therefore, postulated his own dialectical theory which has come to be known as dialectical materialism. It utilized the surrogate *zeitgeist* of economic determinism as the prime mover in society.

The theory builds upon the Hegelian view but substitutes for the main terms certain surrogates more acceptable to his own kind of determinism. For the Hegelian thesis, Marx substituted the bourgeoisie; for the antithesis, the proletariat. These dichotomous institutions might be acceptable to Hegel, but what probably would not be, was Marx's surrogate for the *zeitgeist,* namely economic determinism. This secular counterpart for the almost sacred Hegelian metaphysical entity was the path to social truth, bringing about the ideal collective society which Marx envisioned. It was economic determinism, then, acting as the

motivating engine, thus pitting the antithetical dynamic proletarian movement against the static bourgeois society, which would bring about the ultimate truth of the utopian classless society. Moreover, when this was attained, the dialectical process would end, and the classless society would prevail.

Unknowingly, Marx, too, recognized the potency of the word in rhetoric. This was illustrated when his clarion cry of "Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains," echoed from the pages of *The Communist Manifesto* down the corridors of time. Like Hegel, however, he, too, did not follow through on rhetoric as the surrogate world spirit, although he manifested its use in practice.

It is this theory on the part of Hegel, and of Marx as well, which is thus altered here. I suggest that rhetoric be accorded its proper seminal function as the surrogate *zeitgeist,* the prime mover in the structural changes of society, but in an expanded sense. Since rhetoric replaced both Hegel's *zeitgeist* and Marx's economic determinism as the relatively free motive power for socio-cultural change, this process, therefore, is herein dubbed the new dialectic. Rhetoric as the message and its role in inventing a revised code of language, in the new dialectic, however, needs further exploration.

VI

RHETORIC AS THE SURROGATE *ZEITGEIST*

When it is asserted that rhetoric, as the surrogate *zeitgeist,* uses language as the code in the new dialectic, the assertion transcends one of the ordinary meanings of the function of rhetoric in society. This meaning is that rhetoric, as effective discourse, persuades a society to change its values and to develop in a new or different direction; it revolutionizes society, in short. Another role is, of course, to support the *status quo.* While these are nominally the roles that functional persuasive discourse assumes — and as such it does accomplish many of the changes in the fashion — they are not the only significant ingredients of rhetoric as the successor to Hegel's *zeitgeist* or world spirit. What is salient is the process of change within the language code itself as a precursor to the use of language within the rhetorical message. This is based upon the Sapir-Whorf theory that language is the most important element in a culture. It is also founded upon Roland Barthes' theory which suggests that in order to accomplish this change the first need is to alter the language foundation or the code itself. Moreover, it is here that rhetoric plays a seminal role in altering the culture. Eventually, through the use of this altered language code, rhetoric modifies society.

I suggest, therefore, that it is Roland Barthes' philosophy of the word and language which lends further impetus to the acceptance of rhetoric as the surrogate *zeitgeist,* or successor to the spirit of the world in Hegel's metaphysical logic of history. Rhetoric as message works on the world and code of language in the culture, not in the metaphysical realm, but in the realistic and pragmatic one. It thus changes the language structure first. Only when the altered language structure is accepted can the changes be affected in the social structure. If this is understood in linguistic terms with language as the code and rhetoric as the message, the foundation is laid for comprehending the constant metamorphosis of the word, and then eventually of the society. One could go on at length to support this claim, but simply put, it means that, while the rhetorical messages are structured upon the language code and thus all communication works in that fashion, rhetoric also accomplishes another significant, indeed, seminal task. The changes in the culture through the language code are the direct outgrowth of the rhetorical innovations in invention. This is to say that rhetoric as *zeitgeist* first brings changes in the language code, persuading the code — so to speak — to build a different foundation. In other words, the use of rhetorical discourse results in a different language foundation. In other words, the use of rhetorical discourse results in a different language icon. Thus, finally, rhetoric invents a new language icon, which, through its altered prism, begins the process of social and cultural change. Moreover, the change that rhetoric invents is the precursor of changes in the value structure of the society, too, and is, therefore, axiological.

An example or two might illustrate this function. Herbert Marcuse's *Critique of Pure Tolerance* attempted to invent a new meaning for "tolerance" as a term in the language code. It was to be restricted for the radicals rather than for everyone.

The invention of "person" as a more generalized term than "man" in such newly-involved terms as "chairperson," "spokesperson," and the like was accomplished through rhetoric. This new language code was first necessary before society's values could be altered. Only then could women be given an extended role in the society.

Moreover, in a similar manner came alterations in the language code such as the invention of "affirmative action" as a positive surrogate for quotas in the universities and professions. This aided minorities to attain middle class status. And negatively, "sexist" was invented through rhetoric as the opposite of "liberated" for similar ends in the women's movement. Many more examples could be cited to point up this rhetorical function in altering

the codal values of society, but these should suggest its viability. Thus, the kind of axiology most receptive to the pragmatic structure of society is not predetermined in the old Hegelian sense, but free in the existential Sartrian one. This can be seen in the scrutinies of rhetoric as *zeitgeist* utilizing the neo-Hegelian dialectic, in which language and communication function on several levels. In the guise of Hegel's essence, that is, the use of suasive language in the thesis, rhetoric supports the establishment, playing a static role, upholding traditional axiological values, and attempting to prevent capricious change. In the guise of Hegel's existence, that is, the use of persuasive discourse in the antithesis, it has a dynamic function, constantly attacking gross stultification and stagnation. And finally, as the *zeitgeist* itself, rhetoric takes on the role of the synthesizer. Committed to revolutionary change, by mediating between the extremes, rhetoric as the surrogate *zeitgeist,* through the use of the altered language, brings about a new synthesis. This becomes one which is acceptable to the majority in a democratic society at a particular juncture of time.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, however, even more important than its use by supporters in the thesis, the critics in the antithesis, and the combiners in the synthesis (where rhetoric is seen as functioning in a fashion which has been largely accepted by most rhetoricians) is another function. It is the role of the rhetoric as message in altering the language code which is later to be used by these different factions as the foundation for their own suasive discourse. It is this role of rhetoric which is the precursor of the changes eventually accepted in the socio-cultural milieu. It is this role which is unique in socio-cultural change, the "real" revolution, which adds impetus to rhetoric as a surrogate *zeitgeist* in the new dialectic, since the subsequent rhetorical messages are founded upon the altered, but later accepted, language code.

Moreover, since the language code has been developed by rhetoric over a period of time in a society, not as a transparent medium, but one which contains within it all the axiological values present at the time of its development, the language code carries with it both aesthetic form in the sense of structure and substantive content in the sense of values. Ultimately, rhetoric's prime task, then, is to alter the language code so that it will have an opportunity to develop a new axiology for the society within which it will operate.

All this adds a significant dimension to rhetorical theory and criticism perhaps not heretofore envisioned by rhetoricians and critics. Accepting all the factors of the role of language and rhetoric in the neo-dialectic means that the discourse — both oral and written — can be analyzed, interpreted, and assessed in a manner in which it has not been done before. The study of rhetoric and the utilization of the hallmarks herein discussed are significant. The process of change via the new dialectic; the salient importance of the word and language as code; the scrutiny of the rhetoric to ascertain, not only how it has persuaded a culture to accept change, but also how it has invented a new language code in order to alter that code before suggesting change in the society; and the examination of movements — all suggest patterns of criticism which will offer discernments of a unique nature. These insights are founded on both the examination of the several structures discussed and upon the scrutiny of the content. Thus, the rhetorician's function is expanded. As a socio-cultural critic, he transcends the roles of the historian, to which he has often been wedded; the psychologist, upon whom he has depended unduly; the literary analyst, some of whose criteria he has used; the political scientist, whose movements he has examined; even the moralist, whose ethical laws he has applied. Not that these disciplines will not still be important. But his prime task is to scrutinize rhetorical structures in all their ramifications, aesthetic and contextual. With this theoretical grounding, the socio-rhetorical critic may take his proper place, if not at the summit of all the disciplines, certainly very close to it. In the end, therefore, as well as in the beginning, is the omnipotent word with, the omnipotent rhetoric which changes and then utilizes the word to bring about the great spectacle of socio-cultural change.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *Republic* p. 534E

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 390C

[3] *Topics*, p. 101b3

[4] See Roland Hall, "Dialectic," *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed., New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967, Vol. II, pp. 385-388.

[5] Radslow A. Tsanoff, *The Great Philosophers*, New York: Harper & Bros., 1953., p. 478.

[6] See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Selections from the Science of Logic," *The Philosophy of Hegel*, Carl J. Friedrich, ed. New York: The Modern Library, 153, 1954, pp. 177-217.

[7] *Ibid.*, "Introduction," p. xii.

[8] See his *Writing Degree Zero*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1968.